

assesses and tracks the components of a process line or an assembly line and overcomes at the least some of the disadvantages of these prior art systems. [Emphasis added].

Objection: No doubt one could find systems that only monitor efficiency of entire plants, but it is not the usual case as the authors imply. This statement is blatantly false: *“Thus, traditional models of monitoring a production line or the overall efficiency of a plant are incapable of providing the real-time efficiency analysis needed to improve the efficiency of individual production lines.”* One cannot discern if this is an error of commission or omission. There are probably 100 or more commercially available systems that monitor and provide efficiency information in real time from plant PLC’s, manual data inputs and other means.

[0016] In one embodiment, data relating to the efficiency of the plant, production line, or components of the production line are gathered, such as unit output values, downtime occurrences, downtime duration, downtime incident codes, downtime categorization, action items, minutes ran, hours scheduled, capable rate, actual output, idle time, total time and waste analysis values. The gathered data are stored and production efficiencies are calculated based upon the gathered data. The results are communicated, such as by the Internet or an intranet, to other parts of the system, including to computers, databases, servers or terminals.

[0017] Methods for determining the efficiency of the manufacturing plant, assembly or process line, or of components of the assembly or process line include gathering data relating to the efficiency of interest, such as of the plant, line or components of the line. This data preferably include one or more of the following types of data: unit output values, downtime occurrences, downtime duration, downtime incident codes, downtime categorization, action items, minutes ran, hours scheduled, capable rate, actual output, idle time, total time and waste analysis values. The gathered data is stored and the efficiencies are calculated based upon the gathered data. The calculated data are communicated, such as via the Internet or an intranet, to other parts of the monitoring system, including to computers, terminals, servers and databases. The gathered and calculated data can also be displayed on a monitor or other viewable display.

Objection: This invention description is nothing more than a reiteration of the previous claims, which I have shown are already embodied in systems and methods currently in commercial use. In the enclosed information from various commercial websites and one trade article there are many descriptions of systems that include the basic concepts of the applicants claims, including the specific data variables referred to throughout the application: “unit output values, downtime occurrences, downtime duration, downtime incident codes, downtime categorization, action items, minutes ran, hours scheduled, capable rate, actual output, idle time, total time and waste analysis values”.

[0051] While particular embodiments of the invention have been shown and described, it will be obvious to those skilled in the art that changes and modifications may be made therein without departing from the invention in its broader aspects.

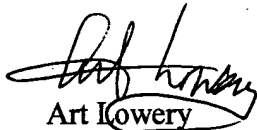
Objection: The “broader aspects” are so broad as to preclude any system that seeks to take input of data comprising: “unit output values, downtime occurrences, downtime duration, downtime incident codes, downtime categorization, action items, minutes ran, hours scheduled, capable rate, actual output, idle time, total time and waste analysis values”. It is not obvious how any system in this field could in any form depart from this invention in its broader aspects.

The invention(s) claimed in this patent application are so well known and documented that they have their own acronym – SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition). I have enclosed a print of the Wikipedia entry on SCADA and as you can see it is full of references similar or identical to the applicant's claims. Such as this Wikipedia entry on SCADA: *"As the term SCADA implies, the Host computers allow for "supervisory level" control of the remote site. But also "acquire data" from the remote field RTUs."* And *"The HMI/SCADA industry was essentially born out of a need for a front-end to a programmable logic controller (PLC)."* This is in direct conflict with almost all of the applicant's claims. What indeed would be the purpose of collecting data from a manufacturing plant if not to measure efficiency, which the applicants claim as basis of their invention?

I have endeavored to be complete in my analysis of the applicant's claims and provide documentation from the public domain to complement my assertions. I have highlighted and/or underlined some of the information I deemed relevant to my objections.

If indeed the endorsement of this application moves forward, it does much to undermine the purpose of the USPTO by absconding with intellectual property in such widespread public use. It is my fervent desire that this patent not reach the final stage of approval without considerable narrowing of the sweeping claims and more definitive documentation of the uniqueness and truly inventive character of any of the applicant's assertions and claims.

Sincerely,



Art Lowery

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